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He wrote about Milton, translated all the plays of Shakspeare, translated Lucian, the epistles of Horace and Cicero ; but the name of his literary products is *legion*. Of Wieland, as of Pindar, the ancients would have fabled that the bees swarmed around him as he lay in his cradle ; and as truly may it be applied to him as to the great poet who applied it to himself, that "he lisped in numbers, and "he laughed in rhymes."

Besides all the many volumes he gave to the public, he was the sole conductor of the most influential paper of the day, the *German Mercury*. In Europe, Wieland stands alone among the editors. He alone could produce fifty volumes for literature, and yet faithfully discharge the duties of the press. Some of Wieland's choicest smaller poems, like "Serafina" and "The Pangs of Separation," have been recently translated into English, but we have no room for quotation. Yet, although few scholars are unacquainted with Wieland, we are, excepting his Agathon and some of his dialogues, not aware of any complete translation of his works. When a version of Oberon, by Sotheby, was announced in England, it was hailed with delight and approbation :

"Lord of each grace—lo ! Wieland's measures swell  
The tones of Sotheby's enchanting spell."

We have neither time nor space to give a regular and specic account of Wieland's various writings and life ; we only intended to give general hints about his character and his genius ; but those of our readers, who desire more information about him, may find it in Longfellow's valuable work on European Poetry, and Hedges' "Prose Writers of Germany," also W. Taylor's "Poetic Survey of German Literature."

It is through allegories and fables that we receive the earliest accounts we have of all nations, particularly those of the East. In these days, when exactness is so much valued, we may, perhaps, be tempted to deplore this medium as liable to mislead ; but must recollect that if we had not their ancient records in that form, we should have them in none. "Fiction," says Bacon, "gives to mankind what history denies, and in some measure satisfies the mind with shadows where it cannot enjoy the substance !" . . . . Our best fables came with the sun, from that genial clime where Nature pours forth her stores with so liberal a hand that she spoils by her indulgence those on whom she bestows her choicest gifts. In that favored land the imagination of authors grows like their own evergreens, in unpruned luxuriance. But the climate of the East, while it fosters lively imaginations and strong passions, disposes the frame to the enjoyment of that luxurious ease which is adverse to freedom. The fathers of families, the chiefs of tribes, and the sovereigns of kingdoms, are, within their separate circles, alike despotic ; their children or subjects are, therefore, compelled to address these dreaded superiors in apologies and tales, lest the plain truth spoken in plain language should offend ; and to avoid this unpleasant result every bird, beast, and fish have received the gift of speech, and have been made to represent kings, or courtiers, soldiers, wise men and foolish, old men and little children, in order, as a Persian author says, "That the ear of authority may be safely approached by the tongue of wisdom."—*Sketches of Persia*.

## A FRENCHMAN'S "COUP D'OEIL" OF AMERICAN ART.

AMONG the pictorial curiosities of the New York great exhibition of 1853, was a great canvas, painted all over with figures of great men, by a great little French artist, by the name of ETEX. Now, according to a principle of gravitation, the laws of which we are not familiar with, this great canvas found its way into the Governor's Room of the New York City Hall. Our readers may have heard of Napoleon's magnificent Triumphal Arch in Paris, planted at one end of the beautiful avenue of the Champs Elysées, —and they have certainly heard of the aforesaid Governor's Room in the New York City Hall, second story, front. Perhaps they have seen both of these metropolitan monuments, and have experienced proper emotions at the contemplation of their respective details. If so, they will recall to mind the fact that Louis Philippe, impelled by patriotic considerations, as well as a reverent disposition to carry out the *grandes idées* of his illustrious predecessor, did authorize the execution of two alti-relievi subjects for the decoration and completion of Napoleon's Arch, which works now appear upon the façade of that structure, to the great delight of all lovers of melo-dramatic Art, and with great satisfaction to the name of ETEX. It is unnecessary to describe these works ; sufficient to say, they are positive facts of existence, and were conceived in the sin of artistic bombast, and born in the iniquity of small regal imitation of imperial grandeur : all we can recollect of that sculpture is the name of ETEX conspicuously displayed in large letters thereon. One monument suggests another, particularly when both have features in common ; we accordingly have to refer to the great Crystal Palace exhibition of New York, the history of which embodies so many disagreeable facts, we must be excused for passing it over lightly as a stepping-stone, in order to reach the Governor's Room in the City Hall. The only reason we have for mentioning the great exhibition at all, is because, like the Triumphal Arch in Paris, it was a *grande idée*, and it is associated with the name of ETEX. The great exhibition contained a picture by A. ETEX :—our readers will please observe that the alti-relievi sculptures in Paris were by *an* ETEX ;—we do not assert the sculpture in Paris and the painting that was in the Great Exhibition to be by the same artist ; we could not prove such a statement : all we assert is, that a strong family likeness is apparent in the Art of the respective productions. We now come to the Governor's Room in the City Hall. Like the Triumphal Arch at Paris and the Great Exhibition of New York, the Governor's Room in the City Hall is a *grande idée*. We do not know to whom to attribute its original conception, whether to Peter Stuyvesant, Recorder Riker, or to Fitz Greene Halleck, the only civic statesman and poet that we ever read of or revered in our youthful days. Certain it is that the Governor's Room is a civic curiosity and *sui generis* ; and what is equally true, it has

been the favorite outlet for the decorative taste of our elected authorities for many years. We greatly mistrust that the origin of the Governor's Room is due to some artist of an evil designing nature, who succeeded in corrupting aldermen to such an extent as to lead them to establish a precedent price for governors' portraits at the rate of one thousand dollars each. If so, that artist was an ornament to his profession. We are sorry to say, however, this price has been virtuously cut down one-half by some of the more able financial Common Councilmen of the present time. However this may be, the great liberality of our city government has led to one important result, and that is the donation of various works of Art to the gallery of the Governor's Room. Among these we would especially mention a silk-handkerchief portrait of Washington that came from despotie Europe, to say nothing of the sandstone statue in front of the Hall, which is also by a foreigner. But the largest Art donation is the great canvas alluded to in the beginning of this article ;—and now we come to a description of that picture.

The canvas, like the President's Message, offers several points for consideration. We have Washington in full stature, relieved upon a background of figures ; one string of heads, to the right, stretches away backward in lineal perspective to the Potomac river, the last head opposed to the person of Mr. Van Buren, but in likeness unrecognizable, is crowned by the Capitol building in the distance. What a beautiful idea ! By the side of Washington, Franklin stands surrounded by allegorical infants, including one Indian papoose, all of whom are evidently asking for pennies, while three children on the ground in front, detached from the group, are puzzling their little brains over an unintelligible scroll, inscribed with the words, "Constitution and the Law." Now Frenchmen are satirical, and we should like to know, in the name of the American people, if this feature of the general design is intended for a quiz. Will one of our patriotic newspapers inquire into this ? Besides, why should Franklin be surrounded with so many children ? On the left are a multitude of people, headed by Clay, Calhoun, and Webster, and in front of these appears a Quaker, projecting himself with extraordinary *empressement* into the arms of a military officer, intended, we hope, to symbolize one truly reliable institution, the National Guard ; just over the group is the head of a dejected female, probably meant for the wife of a discharged postmaster ; and surmounting the entire congregation of symbolical figures, as well as the usual American accessories of railroads and manufactories,\* mountains, rivers, oceans, and clouds, is spread out another incomprehensible female, bearing the American flag, and clothed in a costume which utterly defies description. Again do we mistrust satire ; that woman is not "nationally considered." We have seen many of our women queerly apparelled, but never in such outlandish gear as that. And she is positively ugly, which is a disqualifying

adjective the American woman knows nothing of ;—will the next Women's Rights' convention take into consideration this pictorial libel on the American sex ? Such is a sketchy description of this immense canvas.

We must be excused for drawing our own conclusion from this pictorial gift. How is it that a majority of the works of Art, pocket handkerchief and all, that have been presented to the city, have been tendered during the reign of Fernando Wood, and are mostly the productions of France ? Notwithstanding that Washington seems to be the favorite subject of foreign Art efforts, we suspect it to proceed from a disposition quite antagonistic to the principles of Washington. The French are great idealists, and we have noticed, as a characteristic trait of idealists, that a desire to develop any liberal views entertained by them is more or less controlled by the prospects of gaining or losing something for their own private interests ;—at all events, they never dream of taking into consideration a neighbor's loss. Robespierre, Marat, and all the *sans culottes*, including the famous *dames des halles*, were models of idealists. We suspect, therefore, that a French idealist, in this commercial age, is eloquent upon *grandes idées*, so long as there is no opportunity at hand to make a loss by putting them in practice ; he is content to admire Washington and follow Louis Napoleon. In accordance with this reasoning, we fancy we can detect, on the part of the French artists who have honored our city by administering so many Washingtons to us, and M. A. Etex in particular, a desire to flatter and console Fernando Wood, whose ability is so strikingly similar to that of Louis Napoleon. We cannot otherwise account for the peculiar arrangement of figures in M. A. Etex's picture—all those heads of Presidents leading in a direct line to the White House, and the last one mysteriously unrecognizable. It appears to us very much like a politician's telescopic view of futurity, allegorically presented to a dull artistic perception. Entertaining the greatest admiration of Fernando Wood's capacity, we think that allegory suits his tone of mind remarkably well.

Having finished this digression, we have to inform our readers that the foregoing is but a preface to various extracts from M. Etex's *coup d'aile*. In order to modify the rage of the next Women's Rights convention, which we have anticipated in our suggestion above, we quote the following as a peroration to succeeding extracts :

"It is only through the agency of Love and that of woman that Art has derived its sublimest inspirations ! Perhaps, I am in error ; but, to my mind, Art will never spread its roots in the United States so long as women contend for political martyrdom, and continue to take pride in masculine heroism. Art demands for its nutriment grace, delicacy, chivalric simplicity, and freedom from affectation. What renders the wonderful Art of the Greeks so fascinating is the union of unconscious freedom with noble dignity which with this people was so natural,—it is the cultivation of the Beautiful ; a religious love of beautiful forms, a love replaced by no substitute in modern times, and of which the civilization of the United States, per-

\* No Art-institutions are visible.

haps, furnishes the least encouraging development. This young republic, admired by the French republicans of the old school as the model of future republics, is nothing but a thing of mushroom growth—a coarse and energetic monster that stands forth the forlorn hope of an antiquated society deprived of its compass, and living upon a sea of worn-out illusions."

Now, what did we say about French idealism! Do the sentiments of the picture and the above sentiments harmonize? But let us pass on, and reënter the Governor's Room in the "Palais de City Hall," which he reports as the only locality where any works of Art are to be found "officially placed."

"Upon the first story are three long rooms intercommunicating, where are two portraits of George Washington, one of which is by Trumbull, a citizen, a painter, and a soldier, whom George Washington entertained so much respect for that he never proposed any undertaking without consulting him; there is a highly popular American proverb which in effect says, that whatever was approved of by Jonathan Trumbull that would be the best course to pursue."

M. Etex is certainly not well read in American history. After alluding to about a dozen full-length portraits of the "celebrated men of the State of New York," "two busts, one in plaster, of Henry Clay, and the other in bronze, of Daniel Webster," he says:

"In one room, and placed upon a throne, is the chair used by George Washington on the occasion of the signing of the act of Independence (!) All these works of Art, all these pictures, amounting in all, perhaps, to sixty canvases, would form a sufficiently interesting historical gallery if, instead of being heaped *pêle-mêle*, they were tastefully arranged in the order of their respective dates. This simple visit to the City Hall furnishes an idea of the state of Art in the United States (!) But it is not necessary to conclude by this that the Americans do not love Art: they love it quite as much as German shoemakers, or even French and English merchants. It seems to me, in fact, that they show more real taste for it than the latter, for the reason that they naturally possess more intensity and passion."

If any objection could be advanced to the society wherein M. Etex has placed us, the objection is removed by the compliment. After stating that an artist formerly employed by the government, and who had "become celebrated," could not procure the least commission—"nothing but some portraits, few and far between, to keep himself, his wife, and children from starvation," and that "the only objects of Art he contemplated with solid pleasure in the United States were a few little works by Indian women," he condescends to take up the subject of sculpture, and in the course of his consideration of that branch of Art, first our own city, then the city of Washington, is brought forward to illustrate American barbarism:

"New York pays no more attention to statuary sculpture than to painting. One Americo-Italian marble-cutter is amply sufficient; and he only constructs tombs in the worst possible taste; which, however, meet with the heartiest approval, for the poorer they are, from an Art point of view, the greater the success of these frightful monstrosities. And yet I

have remarked a few busts, but nobody can inform you who executed them. Why it is so I cannot imagine. In this country of commercial and industrial pretension, there seems to exist a perfect horror of starting into life the reputation of an artist. For instance, at Washington, you are never informed of the name of the architect who, in my opinion, is under orders to ruin the country's chief monument, the Capitol—a building of white marble, the original harmony of which was good, but which is being destroyed by the addition of a lofty and heavy dome, *in imitation of our Pantheon at Paris.*"

"In this connection I have been led to one or two singular observations. Art in this land of liberty is under the control of a military chieftain, an officer of engineers, who has the chief direction of the works of Art-at the Capitol. The architect and his offices, all the painters and sculptors who are employed upon the structure, are subjected to the despotic regulations of this officer, who has *carte blanche* to make such distribution of the annual appropriation as he pleases. It is, therefore, a curious sight, without mentioning other matters, to see the kind of sculpture that is being executed there. Here is the manner of this officer's proceeding—with the approval, no doubt, of the Administration. He has the architect in chief and his subordinates under his thumb; then, at Rome, a very ordinary sculptor, one M. Crowford, who furnishes models in plaster from Rome that are cut in marble on the Capitol grounds by practised Italians; the stone being a very hard greyish-blue white marble from the State of Vermont. Quite indignant at the sight of such a profanation of Art, a sculptor of statues, who had perfected his experience of monumental Art in Europe, tendered his assistance by offering to take charge of the design for the second pediment; the only reply made to him was, that special care was taken to confide the most important works to American subjects (citizens)." This answer was worthy of Roman virtue,

but not at all to the liking of Monsieur ANTOINE ETEx; for if our readers have not divined it, we will take the responsibility of asserting Monsieur ANTOINE ETEx to be the rejected man. As we declared before, however, in relation to his connection with the Parisian bassi-reliefs, we have no proof—except the internal evidence of wounded *amour propre*—in this case we have not even the name of Etex to help us to a conclusion. But let us continue. The following paragraph is quite amusing, on account of the quality of its criticism and the correctness of its information:

"I do not know why, but the superintendent seemed unwilling to hear Mr. Powers's name mentioned; he, who among American sculptors has shown the most talent. This is particularly noticeable in several busts, which are nevertheless a somewhat hard and dry imitation of the works of our sculptor, Houdon. He shows great feebleness, however, in the badly composed group at Washington, that passes for monumental sculpture, placed as a pendant to that of M. Enough (Greenough) a mediocre production.

Now, is it not an unkind cut, to make the author of the Greek Slave responsible for Persico's Indian Girl? Our space forbids us to quote further from M. Etex's comments on Art in Washington. He "pitches into" the Equestrian Jackson with true Quixotic fervor, and denounces the Capi-

tol building again as he passes into the rotunda, in the midst of the "curious" pictures that illustrate the history of the United States. The Declaration of Independence excites *un vif battement de cœur*, and others, by West, (!) obtain the verdict of *naïveté*; all of the latter are proclaimed to be "something false and theatrical, a bad imitation of Paul de la Roche, the painter, who for the American Union, realizes the highest ideal of Art."

The following *rationale* of a prevailing taste in the community is ingenious:

"Formerly a portrait-painter earned considerable money; sometimes he would acquire a fortune in a single tour throughout the United States; but the daguerreotype has brought them to misery—those poor painters of portraits! An American is always engrossed with his own business, and his wife, detesting the long sittings which are so essential, in fact indispensable, in order to enable a painter to furnish a good portrait, much prefers the prompt execution of the photograph, which requires but a few seconds of time. I may say that this half-civilized people—a people so backward in certain respects, especially in relation to the sentiment and delicacies of Art, show a decided preference for the dry, hard, positive and unfeeling results of Monsieur Daguerre's discovery."

The above is a fitting preface to more philosophy of the same profound character:

"Before my trip to the United States, I would often ask myself why American artists of the first rank, like M. Powers, their chief sculptor, and M. Healy, their greatest painter, should reside, the first in Florence, and the second in Paris. Since I have become acquainted with the nature of the Americans, and am aware how impossible it is to procure models of the two sexes, the secret is explained to me. These two gentlemen, with much practical good sense, say to themselves, in this fashion, 'those of my fellow-countrymen who might desire to have either a bust or a portrait—a very rare circumstance—(!) travel abroad; they come to France, and visit Italy; they find us installed in these countries, and they only esteem us the more for being there. On the other hand, what have I to hope for, by living at home deprived of artistic pleasures and recompense, in a country where liberty is the watchword, but where slavery the most ferocious abounds—a slavery superinduced by the hypocritical and austere customs of the country—a slavery that smother the slightest expansion of the first manifestation of the faintest spark of electrical sympathy? Let us betake ourselves to Europe, for if there we find a material dominion over public affairs, there is at least real freedom of sentiment, of nature, of thought, of hope, and the triumphs of genius.'"

We have not by any means exhausted the treasures of thought contained in M. Antoine Etex's "Coup d'œil of American Art." But our space forbids further encroachment upon the patience of our readers. We took up his book to show a principle of psychological attraction—like to like—in the fact of his humbug picture having gravitated to our humbug city government. We cannot insist too strongly upon the study of Art. Art reveals what would otherwise escape notice; it shows the false in all its aspects. The moral of the whole is, whoever would pass for a true man or true woman, let them avoid accepting and displaying presents the product of self-conceit, and as such the badges of corruption.

## GENERAL HISTORY OF THE SEMITIC LANGUAGES.\*

UP to the extent of his ability, the learned author of this book has proposed to do for the Semitic languages what M. Bopp has done for the Indo-European languages, that is, to give a tableau of their grammatical system, so as to show in what manner the Semitics attained to a complete expression of their thoughts through the medium of language. The true theory of languages, says our author, is in one sense but their history, languages having to undergo—being the immediate result of it—all the modifications of the human consciousness. In starting from the historical principle of languages, one arrives at the consideration of the scientific theory of a family of languages, as containing two essential parts: the first being the *exterior* history of the idioms which compose it, their role in time and space, their geography and chronology, and the order and the character of the written monuments which make them known; the second being their *interior* history, such as the organic developments of their processes—their comparative grammar, considered not as an immutable law, but as a subject of perpetual changes. The Semitic languages have had, in the history of philology, the singular destiny of suggesting the comparative method to the learned who early cultivated them, but from the moment this comparative method issued in fruitful results, they become all but utterly barren in the regeneration of linguistic studies. Three or four years' study sufficed to unveil, by means of the analysis of the European languages, the most profound laws of language, whilst the Semitic philology has remained, up to our days, lifelessly shut up within itself, and all but entirely foreign to the general progress of science.

Without agitating the question as to the primitive unity of the Semitic languages, our author thinks that they must be considered as corresponding to a distinct division of the human race, as the character of the people who have spoken them is marked in history by traits as original as the languages which have served as formulas and limits to their thoughts. It is in the religious, and not the political order that the Semitics have exercised their influence. The conquests of Asia, the civilization of Nineveh and that of Babylon are not fairly attributable to them; and we in vain seek the traces of a great Semitic empire anterior to the powerful impulse given by a new religion to the Arabian nation. But that which they failed to do in the order of exterior things, they did in the moral order, and

\* Histoire Générale et Système Comparé des Langues Sémitiques, par Ernest Renan. Paris, 1855.

The Arabs, the Hebrews, the Babylonians, the Chaldees, the Assyrians, the Gauris, and Persians, are considered the Semitic races, and the languages spoken by them the Semitic languages. The word "Semitic" is derived from Shem, the oldest son of Noah, to whom Asia was allotted in the division of the globe between Noah's three sons—Shem being considered as the ancestor of the Semitic race, Ham as the father of the Egyptians and Africans, and Japhet as the progenitor of the inhabitants of Asia Minor and Europe.